



SEAT PLEASANT NEWS

DECEMBER 2012 EDITION Visit us on the web at: www.seatpleasantmd.gov

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Property Assessment Appeal Process</i>	3
<i>Holiday Theft Prevention</i>	5
<i>Tax Help Coming to Seat Pleasant</i>	7
<i>Emergency Preparedness Training</i>	8

City of Seat Pleasant

Mayor

Eugene W. Grant

Council President

Kelly Porter

(At-Large Councilmember)

Ward I Councilmember

Elenora Simms

Ward II Councilmember

Aretha Stephenson

Ward III Councilmember

Reveral Yeargin

Ward IV Councilmember

Gerald Raynor

Ward V Councilmember

Eugene F. Kennedy

At-Large Council member

Johnie L. Higgs, Sr.

Acting City Administrator

Robert L. Ashton

Treasurer

Robert L. Ashton

Chief of Police

Chris Cotillio

Director of Public Works

Johnny Thompson

City Clerk

Dashaun Lanham

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Post Hurricane Sandy Report



On Friday, October 26th, I called an emergency meeting of my senior staff including Johnny Thompson, Public Works Director, Chris Cotillo, Chief of Seat Pleasant Police Department and members of the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company to discuss a strategy and make preparations for the inevitable landfall of Hurricane Sandy. On Monday, October 29th, the City of Seat Pleasant and the Seat Pleasant Fire Department made the decision to activate the Emergency Response Command Post which was a unified operation. The Command Post was set up at the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company. The Public Works Department reported early Monday morning fully staffed and prepared to handle all situations.

As far as any damage caused in the City by the hurricane, there was a report of two water main breaks on Martin Luther King Jr. Highway; the first at Greig Street and the second was closer to Cabin Branch Drive. There was a drain back up on Seat Pleasant Drive and power lines were down on 64th Avenue and Addison Road and Baltic Street. Additionally, there were reported limbs down on Carrington Avenue and G Street. However, these issues were handled quickly and in a safe manner. "This operation went smoothly mainly because of the detailed planning and preparations that were exercised prior to Hurricane Sandy making landfall. The Fire Department, Police Department and Public Works all made a great team," concluded Mr. Thompson.

With the threat of damaging winds, and possible flooding, the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company which housed the Emergency Response Command Post took their preparation to a higher level. In the aftermath, Assistant chief David McGill, who also served as the Incident Commander for the Emergency Response Command Post had this to say, "The storm didn't cause as much damage as expected but we knew we were prepared for the worse. We had over 20 volunteers, 2 engine crews, an ambulance crew, and a utility truck in service. But luckily the biggest problems the City saw were tree limbs down and standing water."

Chief of the Seat Pleasant Police Department, Chris Cotillo had this to report on the hurricane, "I think the Hurricane Sandy Command Post, which was set up by the Mayor and staffed by all of our major City departments, functioned perfectly. Everyone was well prepared for the event and communication between the different entities was extremely proficient which is vital during such an event."

Seat Pleasant Council Member Johnie Higgs commented, "When Hurricane Sandy blew through our City; I had the opportunity to work a shift at the Emergency Response Command Post at the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company. I saw a small municipality working together charting the course of the storm minute by

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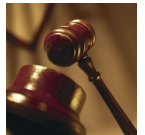
(MAYOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED)

minute; City personnel, fire department workers, my fellow Council Members and local residents. It was truly evident that we are indeed "A City of Excellence!" The Emergency Response Command Post remained open and operational until Tuesday at noon. City crews and Seat Pleasant Volunteers continued to monitor the weather conditions.

The City of Seat Pleasant takes the safety of our residents first and foremost in dangerous situations such as this. We were well prepared for the worst and should all be thankful our City was spared serious long term damage. Other areas across the East Coast were not so fortunate or prepared. As Mayor, I feel it is very important to show that even though we are a small municipality, we are forward in our thinking and take very serious public service and safety of our citizens and residents.

As we move forward, the City of Seat Pleasant will continue to improve our systems in Emergency Responses. However, we are encouraging you, our citizens and residents to prepare also. We are entering into our winter season and the Farmer's Almanac is predicting severe snow storms with heavy accumulation of snow.

I know that if we prepare and work together we will become a City of Excellence.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

The City Council has introduced the following legislations in the month of November:

Ordinance O-13-05

Ordinance O-13-05 to approve the salary upgrade for the Chief of Police.

Ordinance O-13-06

Ordinance O-13-06 for the purpose of amending the City of Seat Pleasant's Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual, Chapter XI "Retirement, Health & Other Benefits," Article 4 "Life Insurance" to clarify certain provisions regarding the life insurance benefit, to add a new Article 5 "Accidental Death and Dismemberment" to provide accidental death and dismemberment insurance coverage for all full-time permanent employees; and all matters generally relating to the provision of life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment benefits to all full-time permanent employees of The City of Seat Pleasant

Resolution R-13-09

Resolution R-13-09 for the purpose of declaring the month of November Municipal Government Works Month in an effort to educate citizens about municipal government and the importance of their participation, The City of Seat Pleasant is proud to promote municipal government awareness.

Resolution R-13-10

Resolution R-13-10 for the purpose of recognizing the Day after Thanksgiving as an Employee Appreciation Day for 2012.

Copies of legislation are available from the Office of the City Clerk at:

City Hall 6301 Addison Road Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743-2125

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Mayor and City Council will meet on the following days in the month of December.

Monday, December 3, 2012
Regular Work Session
Time: 6:00p.m.

Monday, December 10, 2012
Public Session
Time: 7:00 p.m.

COUNCIL CORNER

A WORD FROM COUNCILMEMBER SIMMS



On Thursday, December 20, we will be having a demonstration on how to use the City's website. I believe this will be very useful and help you get the most out of what our City website has to offer. The demonstration will be from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Even if you don't have a computer, it will be a valuable learning experience. Light refreshments will be served so please call 301-336-2600 to let us know you will be attending.

A WORD FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE THE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT APPEAL PROCESS

Property owners sometimes feel that the department's estimate of their property value is wrong. The assessment appeal process is available to allow property owners the opportunity to dispute the value determined by the department. Property values rise and fall to reflect the market. A property owner should file an appeal when they believe that their property is not valued at its current market value.

Appeals may be filed on three occasions:

- upon receipt of an assessment notice;
- by a petition for review; and
- upon purchase of property between January 1 and June 30.

APPEAL ON REASSESSMENT

Property owners will normally receive a Notice of Assessment every three years in the last week of December that shows the old market value as well as the new market value. The new value reflects the market influence and other conditions affecting the property from the time of the last assessment. If you decide to appeal, the first step is to reply to the Notice of Assessment by signing and returning the appeal form within 45 days of the date of the notice. Following this, a personal or telephone hearing will be scheduled. Appeals can also be made in writing, eliminating the need for a hearing.

PETITION FOR REVIEW

You may file a petition for review by January 1 in the two years your property is not valued when events have occurred since your last regular assessment that you believe have caused your property value to decline. If you fail to respond to the Notice of Assessment within the required time frame, you may file a petition for review by January 1 for the following year. The completed form should be mailed to your **local assessment office**. After filing the petition, you will be scheduled for a hearing, or, if you prefer, your written submission can be reviewed eliminating the need for a hearing.

APPEAL UPON PURCHASE

If you purchase a property and the property is transferred after January 1 but before July 1, you may file an appeal within 60 days of the transfer. After filing a written appeal, you will be scheduled for a hearing; or, if you prefer, your written appeal can be reviewed instead of having a hearing.

FIRST STEP - SUPERVISOR'S LEVEL

The first level of the appeal process, known as the Supervisor's level, is informal. You will present your case to an assessor designated by the Supervisor of Assessments. Typically, hearings at this level take approximately 15 minutes. You can obtain a copy of the worksheet for the property free of charge from your local assessment office. The information on the worksheet will be reviewed at the time of the hearing to assure its accuracy.

For assistance in estimating the value of your property, you can obtain sales data from various sources, including: sales listings located in the local assessment office; commercially available sales reports and other information available at local libraries; local Real Estate offices; personal surveys of recently sold comparable properties in the area; and local listings of sales transactions in the newspaper. For a nominal fee, worksheets

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(APPEAL PROCESS CONTINUED)

of comparable properties may be obtained from the assessment office.

To be most effective, you should:

- Focus on those points that affect the value of your property.
- Indicate why the Total New Market Value does not reflect the market value of the property.
- Identify any mathematical errors on the worksheet or inaccurate information describing the characteristics of the property (such as the number of bathrooms, fireplaces, etc.).
- Provide examples of sales of comparable properties which support your findings as to the value of the property.
- Avoid the following issues since they are not relevant to the value under appeal: comparison to past values, percent of increase, additional metropolitan costs, the amount of the tax bill, properties in other taxing jurisdictions, and services rendered or not rendered.

Your first level hearing should be viewed as an opportunity to present evidence which would indicate that the department's value of the property is inaccurate.

SECOND STEP - PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEAL BOARD

Following the hearing, you will receive a final notice. If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal to the next step which is to the Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board. The second step appeal must be filed within 30 days from the date of the final notice from the Supervisor of Assessments.

There is an independent appeal board comprised of 3 local residents in each of the counties and Baltimore City. Property owners generally need no assistance at this step, no fees are required, and they are free to present any supporting evidence. You can obtain a list of the comparable properties that will be used by the assessment office before the Board if you file a written request to the assessment office at least 15 days before the scheduled date of the hearing.

THIRD STEP - MARYLAND TAX COURT

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by the Appeal Board, you can file an appeal within 30 days of the date of the board's decision to the Maryland Tax Court. The Maryland Tax Court is an independent body appointed by the Governor. Although the proceedings are more formal than the first 2 levels, it is still considered to be an informal, administrative hearing. Property owners who are in disagreement with the Tax Court's decision can appeal further through the regular judiciary system. Here you will probably need legal counsel.

RECAP

The assessment appeal process is a mechanism intended to assure an accurate property valuation. If you believe that the value placed upon your property is higher than it should be and if you can provide supporting evidence (such as sales information for properties comparable to your own), then it is in your best interest to appeal.

(THE SECOND HALF TO THE ARTICLE ABOUT TAX DIFFERENTIAL CONCEPT WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER)

A WORD FROM PUBLIC WORKS**A WORD CONCERNING LEAVES**

Leaf season is here! November 12, 2012 - January 1, 2013 is the time when leaves are picked up. This year we need your help. In previous years we were picking up leaves from the curb but last year that was phased out. The Public Works Department is requesting that residents now bag their leaves for pick up. When leaves are put out on the curb, they tend to be blown back into your neighbor's yard or even your own. We are asking that you please be respectful of your neighbor's yard and bag your leaves. Leaves will be picked up by

Bates Trucking, our trash company on Wednesday. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

A WORD FROM THE SEAT PLEASANT POLICE DEPARTMENT

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION DURING THE HOLIDAYS



Theft from auto is a crime of opportunity which is on the rise, especially during the holiday season. Once the perpetrator notices your hard-earned valuables, inside your vehicle, it takes less than one minute to break out a window and make good his escape with your property. Please join us in our efforts to lower theft from auto crimes by keeping your valuables out of plain view. This would include anything of value to you such as purses, laptop computers, radar detectors, GPS Devices, etc. These items need to be taken with you or locked in

your trunk when the vehicle is left unattended. And remember, the City of Seat Pleasant Police Department asks you to keep your valuables, out of plain view. Together we can make a difference!"

A WORD FROM CODE ENFORCEMENT

Since winter will be approaching soon the Code Enforcement Department would like the residents to be mindful of the winter clean up process and ordinance. There has been a prediction of harsh weather this winter with an expectation of heavy snowfall. The following is the Seat Pleasant City Code regarding snow removal.



Seat Pleasant City Code 137-33-34: "Snow Removal - It shall be the duty of the owner and occupant, jointly, of every parcel of real estate adjoining a public sidewalk to keep such sidewalk adjoining such property free from snow and ice and full paved width of such sidewalk. Snow and ice shall be removed within 24 hours after the end of snowfall. Sidewalks in front of commercial establishments and commercial parking lots shall be kept free of snow and ice at all times between the hours of 9:00a.m. and 5:00 p.m."

A WORD FROM CPAC

AVOID THE HOLIDAY BLUES



CPAC has a great partnership with the Seat Pleasant Police Department and District III of the Prince Georges County Police Department. There's a lot of information that comes out of our meetings and there is always something informative to share with you.

First, theft of auto is on the rise in Prince Georges County so please make sure that you don't leave anything in sight in your car. Electronics are very popular with thieves right now. Don't leave your GPS (or its window attachment), cell phone, iPod, etc., in plain view. Even something as innocent as an empty bag will catch the attention of the criminal – they don't know the bag is empty and will break your car window to get something that may possibly be lucrative for them. We often think that our valuables are safe when our doors are locked but that's not necessarily so. If the criminal sees something he wants, he feels no remorse while breaking your window and taking what he sees.

Secondly, it's the holiday shopping season so please be careful when you leave the mall. When you exit the stores and have bags that you don't want to carry, you'll often put them in the trunk of your car so you can continue to shop. Do you know that people sit in parking lots waiting for people like you? If you're in this situation, put your bags in the trunk but leave out of that parking space (I know it's hard when it's a good space) and drive around and find somewhere else to park. The person watching will not see your merchandise and think you're just arriving.

SEAT PLEASANT FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

SEAT PLEASANT VOLUNTEERS PREPARED FOR HURRICANE SANDY

With the threat of damaging winds, and the possible flooding, the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company Inc. (SPVFC) kicked into high gear. On Monday October 29, 2012, the City of Seat Pleasant and fire company made to decision to activate the Joint Command Center which was a unified operation with public works, the police department, the fire department, and City officials. Assistant Chief David McGill (who also served as the Incident Commander of the Joint Command Center) expressed relief that the storm did not cause as much damage as was expected but knew that we were prepared for the worse. The Fire Department We had over 20 volunteers, 2 engine crews, an ambulance crew, and a utility truck in service. Fortunately for us the biggest problems the City faced were downed tree limbs down and standing water. The Joint Command Center remained open and operational until Tuesday at noon. City crews and Seat Pleasant Volunteers will continue to monitor the weather conditions. Anyone wishing to receive Information on the Joint Command Center can contact Phil Martin at 301-836- 1957.

SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER WEATHER DRIVING

The months between November and March constitute one of the busiest road trip seasons. At times travelers can find themselves traveling in adverse weather conditions. Keep these tips in mind should you find yourself traveling in winter weather as forecasters are predicting harsh weather this winter:



1. **Know your route and keep abreast of weather conditions.** The web can be a great source of current weather information. Make a list of Department of Transportation road-condition hotlines and consult them every few hours while you're on the road. Pay special attention to avalanche conditions along your route, because temporary road closures are common in mountain areas.
2. **Drink plenty of water.** When the weather is chilly, dehydration might seem unlikely, but according to a study by the Mayo Clinic, as little as 1-2 percent loss of body weight can lead to fatigue and reduced alertness - both of which can be deadly when you are driving in icy conditions. Carry (and drink) five to six 16 ounce bottles of water per day. Keep them with you in the passenger compartment, as they might freeze in the trunk.
3. **Eat enough food.** Your body needs more nourishment in cold weather than it does on a balmy summer day. Avoid candy bars and other quick sugar-release snacks. Sandwiches, fruit or a thermos of hearty stew are better choices. Carry a day's worth of high-energy food and water in a warm area of your vehicle in case you are stranded for a few hours.
4. **Pack a winter travel safety kit.** Include a cell phone, an ice scraper and brush, a tow rope, cat litter (for use as a traction aid), blankets, a good flashlight, a candle, matches, a good book, a portable weather radio and a can of lock de-icer. (Never use hot water on glass or locks as it will refreeze and create a bigger problem.)
5. **Slow down.** A good rule of thumb is to reduce speed by 50 percent in snowy conditions. Blasting through snowdrifts may look cool on TV advertisements, but it's way too hard on your vehicle to be worth it. Equally important: Don't go too slow. Your car needs momentum to keep moving through snow on grades.
6. **Keep a light touch on the controls.** Smooth operation is the key to keeping control in slippery situations. Nervousness can lead to a hard clench of the steering wheel, which can result in loss of control. Consciously loosen your grasp or stretch out your fingers from time to time to help prevent that white-knuckled grip.
7. **Know how to recover from skids.** When braking on a slippery road, it's all too easy to "lock up" your

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(WINTER WEATHER TRAVEL CONTINUED)

Wheels by stepping on brakes a little too hard. If you start to skid, steer the vehicle gently in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go and don't touch the brakes. This used to be called "turning into the skid", but tests have shown drivers often misinterpret these works in real-life situations.

8. Keep your tires in good condition and properly inflated. Cold weather reduces the tire pressure, so check and adjust frequently. Tire tread depth should be at least 1/8 inch, and good snow tires with lugs will outperform just about any all-weather tire on the market. Carry (and be able to install) traction-control devices like snow chains whenever you know you will be in a snowy area. Sometimes such devices are required, and if you don't have a set, you'll be forced to pay a premium to acquire them on the spot.

9. Make frequent rest stops. Winter travel is much more fatiguing than summer cruising, so stop every hour or so. Get out and stretch - maybe even make a few snow angels! It only takes five minutes to significantly improve your level of alertness.

10. If you get stuck..... Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper. Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way. Use a light touch on the gas to ease your car out. Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and underside of the car. Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels to help get traction. **If taking these steps are not possible,** stay warm and wait for assistance. Make sure that your exhaust pipe is clear of any obstructions, including snow and ice; if you don't, carbon monoxide can build up inside your vehicle.

CITY HOLDS ANNUAL VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

On Monday, November 12 at 10 a.m. the City of Seat Pleasant held its Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Seat Pleasant Activity Center. It is an annual tradition held by the City to honor those who served their country to ensure the freedoms we all presently enjoy.

Mayor Grant was the Master of Ceremonies and the guest speaker for the event was Cynthia Mason-Posey, Director for Advocacy and Outreach for the Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs. During her speech she shared timely and useful information with the veterans regarding the benefits they are entitled to but may not be aware of which can help them now and in their later years.



Senator Joanne C. Benson, Delegate Greg Hall and Peter Franchot, Comptroller of Maryland, were on hand to share the event with the veterans. Their presence was much appreciated. Kim Carrington and Wesley Mountain also lent their considerable vocal talent to the festivities and the Largo High School AFJROTC headed by Major Gerald Barnes participated in the event. Council members actively participated in the event including Councilman Yeargin, who recited a poem he wrote during the program. The City would like to thank all those who supported and/or attended the event.



FREE TAX HELP AGAIN COMING TO SEAT PLEASANT

Seat Pleasant will once again be a site for AARP to provide free tax help for low to moderate income taxpayers with special attention to those age 60 and older. Look for additional information in coming newsletter editions on how to sign up for this valuable resource.

City of Seat Pleasant

"A City of Excellence"

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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PERMIT #235

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS.....

WE'VE GOT ANSWERS!

The City of Seat Pleasant, "A City of Excellence"
invites you to take a journey on the City's website.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2012

1:00 - 2:00 P.M.

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

5301 ADDISON ROAD

SEAT PLEASANT, MARYLAND 20743

Come and learn how to navigate the City's website
to find valuable information you could be missing.

This session is free and open to all. For more information or to R.S.V.P. call 301-336-2600.

Light refreshments will be served.



The City of Seat Pleasant

"A City of Excellence"

Invites you to

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

Saturday, December 15, 2012

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Seat Pleasant Activity Center

5720 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743

For more information or to R.S.V.P. call
301-336-2600.

DON'T BE SCARED - BE PREPARED!